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ABSTRACT

This document presents the complete findings, full wordings, complete responses, and sample sizes from a series of surveys conduced from 1998 through 2002. The surveys covered a variety of topics about public education, including student achievement, academic standards, standardized testing, accountability, curriculum, safety and discipline, parental involvement, and the status of the teaching profession. The findings are presented here, without commentary, in tabular form. Also included in the document is a list of the studies cited and analyzed. (WFA)

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Where We Are Now: 12 Things You Need to Know About Public Opinion and Public Schools. Complete Survey Findings.

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COMPLETE SURVEY FINDINGS

Where We Are Now

12 Things You Need to Know about
PUBLIC OPINION and **PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

PUBLIC AGENDA

Based on a Report
from Public Agenda

Washington Mutual

Underwritten by
Washington Mutual

EA032 609

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Methodology

Where We Are Now draws upon findings from more than a dozen national public opinion studies conducted by Public Agenda and others over the past decade. Many topics about public education are covered, including student achievement, academic standards, standardized testing, accountability, curriculum, safety and discipline, parental involvement and the status of the teaching profession, among others. In addition, the findings culled for *Where We Are Now* capture the opinions and perceptions of virtually all of the stakeholders in public education today—parents, students, teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members, college professors, employers and taxpayers.

All surveys reported in *Where We Are Now* are based on nationally representative random samples of respondents. Sample size, interview length, method (e.g., mail vs. telephone survey) and field period vary depending on the research goals for each particular study.

The *Complete Survey Findings for Where We Are Now* provides full question wording, sample size and complete responses for each finding cited in the report. Results of less than .5% are signified by an asterisk. Results of zero are signified by a dash. All findings have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Combining answer categories may produce slight discrepancies between the numbers in these survey results and numbers in the report. Unless otherwise noted, "students" are public school students in 6^{th}-12^{th} grade; "teachers" are K-12 public school teachers; "parents" refers to those who have a child in grades K-12 in public school; "employers" refers to those who make hiring decisions for employees recently out of high school or college; and "professors" refers to those who taught freshmen or sophomores in the past two years.

The *Complete Survey Findings for Where We Are Now* is downloadable, free of charge, from www.publicagenda.org. Full copies of Public Agenda education reports since 1998 also can be downloaded free of charge. Print copies of all Public Agenda studies referred to in this report can be purchased by contacting Public Agenda directly (212-686-6610). Bulk purchases are available by arrangement.

What follows is a complete list of works cited in *Where We Are Now*, including both Public Agenda studies and those conducted by other research organizations.

Public Agenda studies (in reverse chronological order):

A Lot Easier Said Than Done: Parents Talk about Raising Children in Today's America Farkas, Steve, Jean Johnson and Ann Duffett with Leslie Wilson and Jackie Vine (Public Agenda, 2002). Sample: 1,607 parents of children between 5 and 17 years old. Funding provided by State Farm Insurance Companies with additional support from the Family Friendly Programming Forum of the Association of National Advertisers, Inc.

Aggravating Circumstances: A Status Report on Rudeness in America Farkas, Steve and Jean Johnson with Ann Duffett and Kathleen Collins (Public Agenda 2002). Sample: 2,013 adults. Funding provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools Johnson, Jean, Steve Farkas, Ann Duffett and Kathleen Collins (Public Agenda, 2002). Sample: 801 parents of public high school students; 920 public high school teachers; and 1,008 public high school students. Funding provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Reality Check Johnson, Jean, Steve Farkas and Ann Duffett (Public Agenda, 1998-2002). Sample: 2002: 600 K-12 public school teachers; 610 parents of K-12 public school students; 600 public school students in middle or high school; 251 employers who make hiring decisions for employees recently out of high school or college; and 252 college professors who taught freshmen or sophomores in the past two years. 2001: 601 teachers; 602 parents; 600 students; 251 employers; and 254 professors. 2000: 604 teachers; 615 parents; 605 students; 260 employers; and 251 professors. 1999: 700 teachers; 708 parents; 702 students; 252 employers; and 257 professors. 1998: 700 teachers; 700 parents; 700 students; 250 employers; and 250 professors. Funding provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts, with additional support from the GE Fund.

Just Waiting to Be Asked?: A Fresh Look at Attitudes on Public Engagement Farkas, Steve, Patrick Foley and Ann Duffett with Tony Foleno and Jean Johnson (Public Agenda, 2001). Sample: 686 superintendents; 475 school board members; 404 K-12 public school teachers; and 809 adults. Funding provided by the American Federation of Teachers, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, The George Gund Foundation, the National School Boards Association and the U.S. Department of Education.

Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership Farkas, Steve, Jean Johnson, Ann Duffett and Tony Foleno, with Patrick Foley (Public Agenda, 2001). Sample: 853 public school superintendents and 909 public school principals. Funding provided by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds.

A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why Farkas, Steve, Jean Johnson and Tony Foleno, with Ann Duffett and Patrick Foley (Public Agenda, 2000). Sample: 664 K-12 public school teachers with 5 years or less experience. Funding provided by The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and the Open Society Institute.

Great Expectations: How the Public and Parents—White, African American and Hispanic—View Higher Education Immerwahr, John with Tony Foleno (Public Agenda, 2000). Sample: 1,015 adults; 202 African American, 202 Hispanic and 201 white parents of children in high school. Funding provided by The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, Consortium for Policy Research in Education and the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement.

Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools Farkas, Steve, Jean Johnson and Ann Duffett, with Claire Aulicino and Joanna McHugh (Public Agenda, 1999). Sample: 1,220 parents of K-12 public school students and 1,000 K-12 public school teachers. Funding provided by Kraft Foods.

Taking Responsibility: Leaders' Expectations of Higher Education Immerwahr, John (Public Agenda, 1999). Sample: 130 college professors; 163 college administrators and deans; 146 business leaders; and 162 government legislators and advisors. Funding provided by The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

The Price of Admission: The Growing Importance of Higher Education Immerwahr, John (Public Agenda, 1998). Sample: 700 adults. Funding provided by The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

Time to Move On: African American and White Parents Set an Agenda for Public Schools Farkas, Steve and Jean Johnson, with Stephen Immerwahr and Joanna McHugh (Public Agenda, 1998). Sample: 800 White and 800 African American parents

of children in grades K-12 in public or private school. Funding provided by W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Inc. and Rockefeller Foundation. This study was conducted as part of a joint project of Public Agenda and the Public Education Network.

Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education Farkas, Steve and Jean Johnson with Ann Duffett (Public Agenda, 1997). Sample: 900 college professors of education. Funding provided by The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Assignment Incomplete: The Unfinished Business of Education Reform Johnson, Jean with Steve Farkas, Will Friedman, John Immerwahr and Ali Bers (Public Agenda, 1995). Sample: 1,200 adults, including oversamples of 200 parents of public school students and 200 public school teachers. Funding provided by Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Proctor & Gamble Fund, TRW Inc. and The George Gund Foundation.

First Things First: What Americans Expect from the Public Schools Johnson, Jean and John Immerwahr (Public Agenda, 1994). Sample: 869 members of the general public, 320 White parents, 200 African American parents and 204 traditional Christian parents. Funding provided by The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Ashland Oil Foundation, BellSouth Foundation, The Business Roundtable, Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Danforth Foundation, General Mills Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and The Rockefeller Foundation.

Studies conducted by other research organizations:

Demanding Quality Public Education in Tough Economic Times: What Voters Want from Elected Leaders (2003). Public Education Network (P.E.N.). Sample: 1,050 registered voters. www.publiceducation.org

The MetLife Survey of The American Teacher 2002 by Dana Markow, Ph.D. and Marc Scheer, Ph.D., of Harris Interactive, Inc. Sample: 2,308 public school students in grades 7-12 and 1,111 public school teachers in grades 7-12. www.metlife.com

Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools (1998-2002) by Lowell C. Rose and Alec M. Gallup. Sample: 2002: 1,000 adults. 2001: 1,108 adults. 2000: 1,093 adults. 1999: 1,103 adults. 1998: 1,151 adults. www.pdkintl.org/kappan/kappan.htm

NPR/Kaiser Family Foundation/Kennedy School Education Survey (June 1999). Sample: 1,422 adults. www.npr.org/programs/specials/poll/education/education.front.html

School Reform Survey (October 1991). Agenda Magazine/ Louis Harris & Associates. Sample: 1,252 adults. www2.irss.unc.edu/data_archive/catsearch.html

FINDING ONE: The public—including parents, teachers and students—believes that setting standards and enforcing them promotes learning. Social promotion, they say, harms kids.

Q1 Here is a list of problems schools might face. For each one, please tell me how big a problem you think it is—a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem for the public schools in your community. How about...lack of adequate academic standards?

Base: Asked of half the sample	General Public n=1,422
Major	32%
Minor	40%
Not a problem	25%
Don't know	3%

Source: NPR/Kaiser Family Foundation/Kennedy School (June 1999)

Q2 Let me read you some things that employers and educators say are important for students to learn in elementary and high school to have employees who can be competitive in the world and to turn out students who can be properly educated in college. How would you rate the job the schools of this country are doing in teaching and helping their students...to read, write, and reason well...excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?

	General Public n=1,252
Excellent	5%
Pretty good	31%
Only fair	41%
Poor	23%
Not sure	*

Source: School Reform Survey, Louis Harris & Associates (October 1991)

Q3 Here are some problems different public schools may or may not have. Please tell me how serious a problem each is in your own community's public schools. There is not enough emphasis on the basics, such as reading, writing and math.

	General Public n=869
NET Serious	60%
Very serious	36%
Somewhat serious	25%
NET Not serious	36%
Not too serious	15%
Not at all serious	21%
Don't know	4%

Source: First Things First: What Americans Expect from the Public Schools, Public Agenda 1994

Q4 Which more accurately reflects your own views of students' ability to achieve their academic potential in school? Do you think most students achieve their full academic potential in school, or do you think most students achieve only a small part of their academic potential in school?

	General Public n=1,108
Most students achieve their full potential	16%
Most achieve only a small part of their potential	81%
Don't know	3%

Source: Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 2001

Q5 Now I am going to read some statements and ask you to tell me how close they come to describing your school. Most students do the bare minimum they need to get by.

	Students n=600
NET Close	71%
Very close	24%
Somewhat close	48%
NET Not close	27%
Not too close	18%
Not close at all	10%
Don't know	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q6 Right now, would you say you are trying your best to do well in school, or do you think you could try a little harder?

	Students n=600
Trying best to do well in school	45%
Could try a little harder	56%
Don't know	-

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q7 Do you think having guidelines for what students are expected to learn and know helps improve students' academic performance, or not?

	Parents n=608	Teachers* n=594	Employers n=250	Professors n=253
Yes	82%	80%	90%	88%
No	12%	19%	8%	9%
Don't know	6%	1%	2%	3%

*Question wording for teachers: Do you think having guidelines for what students are expected to learn and know helps improve students' academic performance, or doesn't it make much difference?

Source: Reality Check 2001 (Teachers, Employers, Professors); Reality Check 2002 (Parents), Public Agenda

Q8 Some school districts require students to pass a standardized test in order to be promoted. Students who fail the test must either go to summer school or repeat the grade. Do you favor or oppose this policy? Is that strongly or somewhat?

	Parents n=601	Teachers n=590	Employers n=259	Professors n=249	Students* n=598
NET Favor	92%	87%	87%	79%	74%
Strongly favor	75%	52%	66%	49%	36%
Somewhat favor	17%	35%	21%	30%	38%
NET Oppose	7%	12%	11%	19%	25%
Somewhat oppose	3%	8%	4%	11%	14%
Strongly oppose	4%	4%	7%	7%	11%
Don't know	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%

*Question wording for students: Some school districts now require students to meet higher standards in order to be promoted or to graduate. If they can't meet the higher standards, they have to go to summer school to catch up. Would you favor or oppose having your own school district adopt this policy? Is that strongly or somewhat?

Source: Reality Check 2000 (Employers, Professors); Reality Check 2001 (Parents, Teachers, Students), Public Agenda

Q9 Now suppose your school decided that your child was among the students who should go to summer school in order to catch up. Do you think you would approve or oppose the decision? Is that strongly or somewhat?

	Parents n=598
NET Approve	94%
Strongly approve	82%
Somewhat approve	12%
NET Oppose	6%
Somewhat oppose	3%
Strongly oppose	3%
Don't know	1%

Source: Reality Check 2001, Public Agenda

Q10 Now suppose your child finished summer school but still failed to meet the academic standards. Do you think you would approve or oppose holding him or her back a grade?

	Parents n=593
NET Approve	87%
Strongly approve	66%
Somewhat approve	21%
NET Oppose	11%
Somewhat oppose	5%
Strongly oppose	6%
Don't know	3%

Source: Reality Check 2001, Public Agenda

Now I am going to read you several things that may or may not motivate you to work hard at school:

Q11 How about fear of being left back—would that motivate you a lot, a little, or not at all?

	Students n=600
A lot	67%
A little	21%
Not at all	11%
Don't know	*

Q12 How about avoiding summer school—would that motivate you a lot, a little, or not at all?

	Students n=599
A lot	63%
A little	24%
Not at all	13%
Don't know	*

Source: Reality Check 2001, Public Agenda

Q13 Should public schools expect inner-city kids to achieve academic standards that are as high as standards for kids from wealthy backgrounds or should they make some allowances because inner-city kids come from disadvantaged backgrounds?

	African American Parents n=69	White Parents n=458	Teachers n=590
Achieve academic standards that are as high	61%	66%	64%
Make some allowances	33%	28%	33%
Don't know	6%	6%	3%

Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

Q14 How important is it for a school to promote kids to the next grade only after they show they have learned what they were supposed to?

	African American Parents n=401	White Parents n=401
Absolutely essential	83%	82%
Important but not essential	15%	17%
Not too important	3%	1%
Don't know	-	1%

Source: Time to Move On: African American and White Parents Set an Agenda For Public Schools, Public Agenda 1998

Q15 What should be a bigger priority for your own children's schools:

	African American Parents n=799	White Parents n=796
To focus on achieving more diversity and integration	8%	6%
To focus on raising academic standards and achievement	82%	87%
Both (VOL.)	10%	6%
Don't know	*	1%

Source: Time to Move On: African American and White Parents Set an Agenda For Public Schools, Public Agenda 1998

Q16 Social promotion means moving children from grade to grade in order to keep them with others in their own age group. Would you favor stricter standards for social promotion in school even if it meant that significantly more students would be held back?

	General Public n=1,103
Favor	72%
Oppose	26%
Don't know	2%

Source: Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 1999

Q17 Which do you think [is/would be] worse for a child who is struggling in school—to have to repeat a grade, or to be passed to the next grade and be expected to keep up with the work?

	Parents n=606	Teachers n=587	Employers n=249	Professors n=247	Students n=600
To have to repeat a grade	24%	15%	17%	21%	42%
To be passed to the next grade and be expected to keep up with the work	73%	80%	80%	75%	56%
Don't know	3%	5%	3%	5%	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q18 And when it comes to this effort toward higher academic standards, do you think [your school district/the district where you work/teach] should:

Base: Respondents who say their schools are making an effort to put in higher standards	Parents n=392	Teachers n=565	Employers n=134	Professors n=158
Continue the effort	55%	53%	57%	51%
Continue the effort, but make some adjustments	34%	42%	34%	35%
Stop the effort and go back to the way things were	2%	1%	2%	1%
Don't know enough to say	9%	4%	8%	13%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q19 Overall, would you say that the schools are careful and reasonable in putting in place the higher academic standards, or are they being too careless and unreasonable?

Base: Respondents who say their schools are making an effort to put in higher standards	Parents n=390	Teachers n=567	Employers n=134	Professors n=156
Careful and reasonable	84%	83%	81%	75%
Too careless and unreasonable	10%	14%	8%	9%
Don't know	6%	3%	11%	16%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

FINDING TWO: Standards and promotion policies have changed in recent years, and attitudes about local schools have improved. Even so, many students still move ahead without acquiring needed skills.

Q20 Does your school automatically promote students who have reached a maximum age, or not?

TEACHERS	1998 n=674	1999 n=675	2000 n=594	2001 n=584	2002 n=583
Yes	41%	39%	36%	31%	33%
No	45%	48%	50%	53%	53%
Don't know	14%	13%	14%	16%	14%

Source: Reality Check 1998-2002, Public Agenda

Q21 Compared to the past few years, has the number of kids at your school going to summer school for remedial purposes increased, decreased, or remained about the same?

TEACHERS	1998 n=610	1999 n=599	2000 n=543	2001 n=542	2002 n=549
Increased	28%	30%	38%	37%	40%
Decreased	14%	7%	7%	9%	7%
Remained about the same	45%	54%	48%	44%	47%
Don't know	12%	9%	8%	9%	6%

Source: Reality Check 1998-2002, Public Agenda

Q22 Based on your experience with [recent job applicants/new students], are the public schools doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job?

EMPLOYERS	1998 n=246	1999 n=252	2000 n=259	2001 n=250	2002 n=251
Excellent	2%	3%	5%	3%	3%
Good	29%	30%	32%	35%	39%
Fair	49%	45%	46%	44%	39%
Poor	20%	21%	17%	16%	18%
Don't know	1%	*	*	1%	1%

PROFESSORS	1998 n=248	1999 n=256	2000 n=251	2001 n=253	2002 n=251
Excellent	3%	2%	4%	2%	5%
Good	28%	25%	30%	32%	34%
Fair	50%	54%	51%	49%	50%
Poor	18%	17%	14%	15%	10%
Don't know	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%

Source: Reality Check 1998-2002, Public Agenda

Q23 First, in terms of academic achievement, do you think the public schools in the community where you [work/teach] generally expect kids to learn too much, too little, or are the expectations about right?

EMPLOYERS	1998 n=247	1999 n=251	2000 n=259	2001 n=250	2002 n=250
Too much	3%	4%	2%	4%	4%
Too little	55%	56%	55%	44%	48%
About right	39%	37%	38%	47%	42%
Don't know	3%	3%	5%	5%	6%

PROFESSORS	1998 n=249	1999 n=256	2000 n=250	2001 n=248	2002 n=251
Too much	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Too little	66%	60%	59%	55%	47%
About right	28%	33%	38%	35%	44%
Don't know	4%	6%	2%	7%	6%

Source: Reality Check 1998-2002, Public Agenda

Q24 Using the A, B, C, D, FAIL scale again, what grade would you give the school your oldest child attends?

PARENTS	1998 n=1,151*	1999 n=1,103*	2000 n=1,093*	2001 n=1,108*	2002 n=1,000*
A & B	62%	66%	70%	68%	71%
A	22%	24%	26%	28%	27%
B	40%	42%	44%	40%	44%
C	25%	21%	21%	22%	20%
D	8%	7%	5%	6%	6%
FAIL	3%	5%	2%	3%	2%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%

*Sample size for general public; these findings based on subgroup of public school parents: 1998=29%; 1999=33%; 2000=30%; 2001=32%; 2002=26%.

Source: Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 1998-2002

Q25 In your community, is it the public schools or the private schools that have higher academic standards?

PARENTS	1998 n=672	2002 n=591
Public schools	22%	29%
Private schools	42%	35%
Both equally (VOL.)	12%	10%
Don't know	24%	26%

Source: Reality Check 1998 and 2002, Public Agenda

Q26 In your community, is it the public schools or the private schools which generally provide a better education?

PARENTS	1998 n=670	2002 n=593
Public schools	29%	35%
Private schools	37%	32%
Both equally (vol.)	12%	12%
Don't know	22%	22%

Source: Reality Check 1998 and 2002, Public Agenda

Q27 Next I am going to read some statements and ask you how close they come to describing your school. Some kids graduate from my school even though they haven't learned what they were supposed to.

	Teachers n=593
NET Close	48%
Very close	17%
Somewhat close	31%
NET Not close	49%
Not too close	29%
Not close at all	20%
Don't know	3%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q28 In general, which comes closer to what you think usually happens at your school:

	Teachers n=562
Teachers pass students to the next grade as long as they try hard and attend class regularly	46%
Teachers pass students to the next grade ONLY if the students learn what they are supposed to know	52%
Don't know	3%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q29 In the past few years, have there been any students you promoted even though you felt they should have been held back?

	Teachers n=550
Yes	44%
No	55%
Don't know	1%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

FINDING THREE: The vast majority of parents and teachers say standardized tests are useful, and few students are overly anxious about them. But people also think tests can be misused, and many say there's too much emphasis on them.

Q30 Sometimes kids take standardized tests at school—these are tests that all the students in the district have to take, but don't count toward your grades. When you take these tests at school, do you take them very seriously, somewhat seriously, not too seriously, or not seriously at all? If you've never taken this kind of test, please say so.

	Students n=600
NET Seriously	92%
Very seriously	56%
Somewhat seriously	36%
NET Not seriously	7%
Not too seriously	5%
Not seriously at all	3%
Never taken this kind of test	1%
Don't know	-

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q31 Before students are awarded a high school diploma, would you want [your/the] school district [where you work/teach] to require students to:

	Parents n=608	Teachers n=595	Employers n=250	Professors n=251
Pass a basic skills test in reading, writing and math	54%	58%	61%	53%
Pass a more challenging test showing they have learned at higher levels	32%	21%	28%	32%
Requiring kids to pass a test is a bad idea	12%	20%	9%	12%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q32 Here are some views about requiring students to pass standardized tests before they are promoted. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each. How about...Students pay more attention and study harder if they know they must pass a test to get promoted or to graduate.

	Parents n=610	Teachers n=596	Employers n=251	Professors n=252
NET Agree	85%	75%	79%	79%
Strongly agree	57%	40%	49%	42%
Somewhat agree	27%	36%	30%	38%
NET Disagree	14%	23%	18%	16%
Somewhat disagree	9%	14%	10%	8%
Strongly disagree	5%	10%	8%	8%
Don't know	1%	2%	3%	5%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q33 Does knowing you have to pass an exit exam in order to graduate make you work harder in school, or does it not make much difference?

Base: High school students who must take an exit exam	H.S. Students n=152
Work harder	61%
Does not make much difference	39%
Don't know	1%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q34 When it comes to giving students in the elementary grades standardized tests, which of the following comes closer to your view?

	Parents n=604	Teachers n=588
Testing students at a young age is good because struggling students can be identified and helped	78%	59%
Testing students at a young age is wrong because it puts too much pressure on them	20%	39%
Don't know	2%	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q35 Here are some views about requiring students to pass standardized tests before they are promoted. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each. How about...Standardized test scores are a good way to spot struggling students who need tutoring or summer school.

	Teachers n=599	Employers n=251	Professors n=252
NET Agree	62%	79%	78%
Strongly agree	25%	49%	36%
Somewhat agree	38%	30%	42%
NET Disagree	37%	20%	19%
Somewhat disagree	15%	11%	10%
Strongly disagree	22%	9%	10%
Don't know	1%	1%	3%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q36 From your experience, would you say these tests ask fair questions that you should be able to answer, or are the questions so difficult or unfair that you cannot be expected to answer them?

Base: Have taken standardized tests	Students n=592
Fair questions	79%
Difficult or unfair questions	20%
Don't know	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q37 Would you say that your child is required to take too many standardized tests, too few, are things about right, or don't you know?

	Parents n=598
Too many	12%
Too few	9%
About right	61%
Don't know	18%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q38 On average, (black/African American) students don't do as well as whites on standardized achievement tests. Do you think this is mostly because:

	African American Parents n=766
The tests are culturally biased against black/African American students	28%
Because the tests measure real differences in educational achievement	44%
Because black/African American students keep hearing they're not supposed to do well so they don't	18%
Don't know	10%

Source: Time to Move On: African American and White Parents Set an Agenda For Public Schools, Public Agenda 1998

Q39 Which best describes how nervous you get when you take standardized tests:

	Students n=598
I don't get nervous at all	23%
I get nervous but I handle it	73%
I get so nervous that I can't take the test	5%
Don't know	-

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q40 Here are some views about requiring students to pass standardized tests before they are promoted. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each. How about…It's wrong to use the results of just one test to decide whether a student gets promoted or graduates.

	Parents n=610	Teachers n=600	Employers n=250	Professors n=252	Students n=600
NET Agree	75%	89%	81%	83%	62%
Strongly agree	55%	78%	64%	69%	45%
Somewhat agree	21%	11%	16%	14%	17%
NET Disagree	23%	11%	19%	16%	37%
Somewhat disagree	12%	4%	12%	8%	17%
Strongly disagree	11%	7%	7%	8%	20%
Don't know	1%	*	*	2%	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q41 Here are some views about requiring students to pass standardized tests before they are promoted. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each. How about...The schools should use standardized test scores along with teacher evaluations to decide if students should be promoted or graduate.

	Parents n=610	Teachers n=598	Employers n=251	Professors n=251	Students n=599
NET Agree	83%	80%	86%	82%	71%
Strongly agree	52%	53%	59%	47%	38%
Somewhat agree	31%	27%	27%	35%	33%
NET Disagree	16%	20%	12%	17%	27%
Somewhat disagree	10%	8%	8%	8%	15%
Strongly disagree	6%	12%	4%	9%	11%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q42 At your school, are students promoted based solely on their standardized test scores, only in part, or are the scores not part of the promotion decision?

	Teachers n=595
Students promoted solely on standardized tests	3%
Only in part	39%
Scores not part of decision	56%
Don't know	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q43 Here are some views about requiring students to pass standardized tests before they are promoted. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each. How about...The schools today place far too much emphasis on standardized test scores.

	Parents n=608	Teachers n=597	Employers n=250	Professors n=251	Students n=599
NET Agree	60%	84%	52%	57%	45%
Strongly agree	33%	58%	35%	30%	17%
Somewhat agree	27%	26%	18%	27%	28%
NET Disagree	36%	16%	42%	38%	52%
Somewhat disagree	27%	11%	21%	17%	37%
Strongly disagree	9%	5%	22%	21%	15%
Don't know	4%	*	5%	6%	3%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q44 Here are some views about requiring students to pass standardized tests before they are promoted. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each. How about...Teachers will end up teaching to the test instead of making sure real learning takes place.

	Parents n=608	Teachers n=599	Employers n=251	Professors n=252
NET Agree	66%	79%	64%	79%
Strongly agree	37%	50%	40%	50%
Somewhat agree	29%	30%	24%	29%
NET Disagree	30%	20%	33%	18%
Somewhat disagree	20%	10%	19%	8%
Strongly disagree	10%	10%	14%	10%
Don't know	4%	1%	3%	3%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q45 Do your teachers focus so much on preparing for these standardized tests that they neglect other important topics, or does this usually not happen?

	Students n=590
Focus so much on preparing that they neglect other important topics	20%
This usually does not happen	78%
Don't know	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q46 In your opinion, which is the best way to measure student academic achievement—by means of test scores, or by classroom work and homework?

	Parents n=260
By means of test scores	22%
By classroom work and homework	61%
Both combined (VOL.)	16%
Don't know	1%

Source: Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 2002

FINDING FOUR: While teachers support higher academic standards, they have qualms about some aspects of testing.

Q47 Some school districts require students to pass a standardized test in order to be promoted. Students who fail the test must either go to summer school or repeat the grade. Do you favor or oppose this policy? Is that strongly or somewhat?

	Teachers n=590
NET Favor	87%
Strongly favor	52%
Somewhat favor	35%
NET Oppose	12%
Somewhat oppose	8%
Strongly oppose	4%
Don't know	2%

Source: Reality Check 2001, Public Agenda

Q48 Overall, would you say that the schools are careful and reasonable in putting in place the higher academic standards, or are they being too careless and unreasonable?

Base: Respondents who say their schools are making an effort to put in higher standards	Teachers n=567
Careful and reasonable	83%
Too careless and unreasonable	14%
Don't know	3%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q49 Do you think having guidelines for what students are expected to learn and know helps improve students' academic performance, or doesn't it make much difference?

	Teachers n=594
Helps improve performance	80%
Doesn't make much difference	19%
Don't know	1%

Source: Reality Check 2001, Public Agenda

Q50 Here are some views about requiring students to pass standardized tests before they are promoted. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each. How about…Students pay more attention and study harder if they know they must pass a test to get promoted or to graduate.

	Teachers n=596
NET Agree	75%
Strongly agree	40%
Somewhat agree	36%
NET Disagree	23%
Somewhat disagree	14%
Strongly disagree	10%
Don't know	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q51 Here are some views about requiring students to pass standardized tests before they are promoted. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each. How about…Standardized test scores are a good way to spot struggling students who need tutoring or summer school.

	Teachers n=599
NET Agree	62%
Strongly agree	25%
Somewhat agree	38%
NET Disagree	37%
Somewhat disagree	15%
Strongly disagree	22%
Don't know	1%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q52 And when it comes to this effort toward higher academic standards, do you think your school district should:

Base: Respondents who say their schools are making an effort to put in higher standards	Teachers n=565
Continue the effort	53%
Continue the effort, but make some adjustments	42%
Stop the effort and go back to the way things were	1%
Don't know enough to say	4%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q53 Here are some views about requiring students to pass standardized tests before they are promoted. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each. How about...Teachers will end up teaching to the test instead of making sure real learning takes place.

	Parents n=608	Teachers n=599	Employers n=251	Professors n=252
NET Agree	66%	79%	64%	79%
Strongly agree	37%	50%	40%	50%
Somewhat agree	29%	30%	24%	29%
NET Disagree	30%	20%	33%	18%
Somewhat disagree	20%	10%	19%	8%
Strongly disagree	10%	10%	14%	10%
Don't know	4%	1%	3%	3%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q54 Thinking about your own classroom, do you find you have to spend so much class time preparing students for standardized tests that real learning is neglected or is this not the case?

	Teachers n=540
Focus so much on preparing that real learning is neglected	26%
This is not the case	73%
Don't know	1%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q55 Think of a school with low student achievement and parents who are not involved. Do you think bringing in exceptionally talented teachers could turn things around, or would this not be enough on its own?

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=664
Talented teachers could turn things around	26%
Talented teachers are not enough on their own	73%
Don't know	1%

Source: A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why, Public Agenda 2000

Q56 If you heard that many students in your school district did poorly on a standardized test, which of the following would be your most likely reaction?

	Teachers n=570
That these students simply lack the ability to do well	30%
That something was wrong with how the test was designed	31%
That the schools failed to adequately prepare the students	32%
Don't know	7%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q57 Some communities with underachieving kids are considering proposals to make educators more accountable by tying improvements in students' academic performance to financial incentives for teachers and principals. Generally speaking, do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?

	Parents n=607	Teachers n=604	Employers n=250	Professors n=252
Good idea	59%	22%	66%	42%
Bad idea	37%	76%	30%	54%
Don't know	5%	2%	4%	4%

Source: Reality Check 2000 (Teachers); Reality Check 2002 (Parents, Employers, Professors), Public Agenda

Q58 Which of these comes closest to your own view about standardized testing in your district?

	Principals n=903
Standardized tests are important, and my district is using them well	41%
Standardized tests are important, but there are serious problems in how they are currently used in my district	25%
Standardized tests are a seriously flawed measure of student achievement—we use them because there's no choice	30%
Not sure	4%

Source: Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership, Public Agenda 2001

Q59 Generally speaking, do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to hold principals accountable for student standardized test scores at the building level?

	Principals n=901
Good idea	34%
Bad idea	48%
Not sure	18%

Source: Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership, Public Agenda 2001

FINDING FIVE: Teachers are troubled by lack of parental support and poor student behavior. Teachers also say their views are generally ignored by decision makers.

Based upon your experiences and observations at your school, how serious a problem are each of the following:

Q60 Parents who fail to set limits and create structure at home for their kids.

	Teachers n=851
NET Serious	83%
Very serious	36%
Somewhat serious	47%
NET Not serious	16%
Not too serious	15%
Not serious at all	1%
Don't know	1%

Q61 Parents who refuse to hold their kids accountable for their behavior or academic performance.

	Teachers n=851
NET Serious	81%
Very serious	31%
Somewhat serious	50%
NET Not serious	19%
Not too serious	16%
Not serious at all	3%
Don't know	1%

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q62 Would you say the morale of the teachers at your school is currently:

	H.S. Teachers n=911
High	15%
Moderate	52%
Low	33%
Not sure	*

Source: Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools, Public Agenda 2001

Q63 And when it comes to teaching your own child [to always do their very best in school,] do you think you have succeeded, or is there still work to be done?

Base: Asked in sequence of parents who responded "absolutely essential" when asked how important it is to teach their child to always do their very best in school	Parents n=1,310
I have succeeded	50%
There is still work to be done	50%
Don't know	*

Source: A Lot Easier Said Than Done: Parents Talk about Raising Children in Today's America, Public Agenda 2002

Q64 Now I am going to read some statements and ask you to tell me how close they come to describing your school. Teachers spend more time trying to keep order in the classroom than teaching students.

	Teachers n=599	Students n=600
NET Close	43%	47%
Very close	16%	21%
Somewhat close	27%	27%
NET Not close	57%	53%
Not too close	30%	28%
Not close at all	27%	25%
Don't know	-	-

Source: Reality Check 2001, Public Agenda

Q65 Given a choice between two schools in otherwise identical districts, which would you prefer to work in:

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=662
The school which paid a significantly higher salary	12%
The school where student behavior and parental support were significantly better	86%
Don't know	2%

Source: A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why, Public Agenda 2000

Q66 Given a choice between two schools in otherwise identical districts, which would you prefer to work in:

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=663
The school which paid a significantly higher salary	17%
The school where administrators gave strong backing and support to teachers	82%
Don't know	1%

Source: A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why, Public Agenda 2000

Q67 I'm going to read you a few statements about the relationship between public schools and their communities. Please tell me if you agree or disagree with each statement. How about…Rank-and-file teachers are often left out of the loop in their district's decision-making process.

	Teachers n=403
NET Agree	70%
Strongly agree	43%
Somewhat agree	27%
NET Disagree	27%
Somewhat disagree	16%
Strongly disagree	11%
Don't know	3%

Source: Just Waiting to Be Asked?: A Fresh Look at Attitudes on Public Engagement, Public Agenda 2000

Q68 When district leaders communicate with teachers about school policy, do you think they are usually:

	Teachers n=400
Trying to gain a better understanding of the issues and concerns of the teachers	23%
Trying to help teachers understand and support what the district leadership wants to accomplish	70%
Neither (VOL.)	4%
Don't know	3%

Source: Just Waiting to Be Asked?: A Fresh Look at Attitudes on Public Engagement, Public Agenda 2000

Q69 When it comes to trying to accomplish your goals at work, how often does it seem to you that your school puts obstacles in your way—often, sometimes or rarely?

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=664
Often	21%
Sometimes	46%
Rarely	32%
Never (VOL.)	1%
Don't know	*

Source: A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why, Public Agenda 2000

Q70 Do you think the officials and administrators in your school district really listen and take into account the issues that teachers care about, is this not happening, or don't you know enough to say?

	Teachers n=394
They listen and take into account issues teachers care about	49%
This is not happening	44%
Don't know enough to say	6%

Source: Just Waiting to Be Asked?: A Fresh Look at Attitudes on Public Engagement, Public Agenda 2000

Q71 For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you think it is an accurate description of the way things are at your school, if things should be a little better, or if things should be a lot better: Teachers regularly meet to share ideas about lesson plans and methods of instruction.

	H.S. Teachers n=912
Accurate description of my school	19%
Should be a little better	37%
Should be a lot better	44%
Not sure	1%

Source: Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools, Public Agenda 2002

FINDING SIX: Americans say all students need the basics, and parents want their own children prepared for college. For most, a college diploma is as indispensable as a high school diploma used to be.

Now here are some things the local public schools in your community could concentrate on teaching. Please tell me whether you think each is absolutely essential, important but not essential, or not too important for your local schools to be teaching.

Q72 How about teaching...Basic reading, writing and math skills?

	Teachers n=237	General Public n=800
Absolutely essential	98%	92%
Important but not essential	2%	8%
Not too important	-	*
Not sure	-	1%

Q73 How about teaching...American history and American geography?

	Teachers n=237	General Public n=800
Absolutely essential	83%	63%
Important but not essential	17%	34%
Not too important	*	3%
Not sure	-	1%

Q74 How about teaching...Biology, chemistry and physics?

	Teachers n=237	General Public n=800
Absolutely essential	65%	59%
Important but not essential	34%	37%
Not too important	*	3%
Not sure	-	1%

Q75 How about teaching...The history and geography of such places as Europe and Asia?

	Teachers n=237	General Public n=800
Absolutely essential	48%	35%
Important but not essential	50%	53%
Not too important	2%	11%
Not sure	-	2%

Q76 How about teaching...Advanced mathematics such as calculus?

	Teachers n=237	General Public n=800
Absolutely essential	22%	37%
Important but not essential	71%	51%
Not too important	7%	11%
Not sure	-	2%

Q77 How about teaching...Sports and athletics?

	Teachers n=237	General Public n=800
Absolutely essential	19%	23%
Important but not essential	64%	58%
Not too important	18%	18%
Not sure	-	1%

Source: Assignment Incomplete: The Unfinished Business of Education Reform, Public Agenda 1995

Q78 How much do you know about the curriculum and academic goals for your child's grade—a lot, a little, or don't you have any information about that?

	Parents n=610
A lot	58%
A little	35%
Don't have any information	7%
Don't know	1%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q79 How much do you know about the availability of rigorous courses in your child's high school—a lot, a little, or don't you have any information about that?

	Parents of H.S. Students n=254
A lot	45%
A little	35%
Don't have any information	18%
Don't know	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q80 How comfortable would you feel doing each of the following: Helping to plan the school curriculum?

	Parents n=1,213
NET Comfortable	61%
Very comfortable	25%
Somewhat comfortable	36%
NET Uncomfortable	38%
Somewhat uncomfortable	24%
Very uncomfortable	13%
Don't know	2%

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q81 Have you personally helped to plan the school curriculum during this school year or the last one?

	Parents n=1,214
Yes	15%
No	85%
Don't know	*

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q82 Before students are awarded a high school diploma, would you want [your/the] school district [where you work/teach] to require students to:

	Parents n=608	Teachers n=595	Employers n=250	Professors n=251
Pass a basic skills test in reading, writing and math	54%	58%	61%	53%
Pass a more challenging test showing they have learned at higher levels	32%	21%	28%	32%
Requiring kids to pass a test is a bad idea	12%	20%	9%	12%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q83 In your opinion, do all students have the ability to reach a high level of learning, or do only some have the ability to reach a high level of learning?

	General Public n=1,108
All have the ability to reach a high level of learning	52%
Only some have the ability	46%
Don't know	2%

Source: Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 2001

Q84 Now I'm going to read you a few statements about a college education and ask if you agree or disagree with them. A college education has become as important as a high school diploma used to be. Do you agree or disagree? Is that strongly or somewhat?

	General Public n=1,006
NET Agree	87%
Strongly agree	68%
Somewhat agree	19%
NET Disagree	11%
Somewhat disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	4%
Don't know	2%

Source: Great Expectations: How the Public and Parents—White, African American and Hispanic—View Higher Education, Public Agenda 2000

Q85 Which statement comes closer to your own view?

	General Public n=685
High school graduates should go on to college because in the long run they'll have better job prospects	86%
High school graduates should take any decent job offer they get because there are so many unemployed people already	9%
Don't know	5%

Source: The Price of Admission: The Growing Importance of Higher Education, Public Agenda 1998

Q86 Which statement comes closer to your own view?

	General Public n=690
(Insert State) needs more college-educated workers so that the state can attract high-tech jobs and businesses.	60%
(Insert State) already has too many college graduates who are competing for scarce jobs.	30%
Don't know	10%

Source: The Price of Admission: The Growing Importance of Higher Education, Public Agenda 1998

Q87 Which of the following do you think would be best for your own child after they finish high school:

	Parents of H.S. Students n=160
To get a job	4%
To go to a trade school	14%
To go to a two-year community college	22%
To go to a four-year college	56%
Don't know	4%

Source: Great Expectations: How the Public and Parents—White, African American and Hispanic—View Higher Education, Public Agenda 2000

Q88 [When it comes to your own child/Thinking of your oldest child,] do you think a college education is something absolutely necessary to get, something helpful but not necessary, or not that important?

Base: Parents of high school students	White Parents n=200	African American Parents n=202	Hispanic Parents n=201
Absolutely necessary	57%	67%	78%
Helpful but not necessary	40%	31%	19%
Not that important	4%	1%	2%
Don't know	-	1%	1%

Source: Great Expectations How the Public and Parents—White, African American and Hispanic—View Higher Education, Public Agenda 2000

Q89 Are you definitely planning to go to college, are you thinking about going to college or do you think you probably won't go to college?

	Students n=600
Definitely	76%
Thinking about	20%
Probably won't go	3%
Definitely won't go (VOL.)	*
Don't know	1%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q90 Now I am going to read you several things that may or may not motivate you to work hard at school. How about wanting to get into a good college—would that motivate you a lot, a little, or not at all?

	H.S. Students n=318
A lot	84%
A little	12%
Not at all	5%
Don't know	-

Source: Reality Check 2001, Public Agenda

Q91 Now I'm going to read you a few statements about a college education and ask if you agree or disagree with them. There are too many students in college today who don't belong there. Do you agree or disagree? Is that strongly or somewhat?

	General Public n=1,006
NET Agree	49%
Strongly agree	27%
Somewhat agree	22%
NET Disagree	40%
Somewhat disagree	22%
Strongly disagree	18%
Don't know	11%

Source: Great Expectations: How the Public and Parents—White, African American and Hispanic—View Higher Education, Public Agenda 2000

Q92 What do you think is the main reason people drop out of college?

	Professors n=130
A lack of motivation and direction	69%
A lack of money	11%
A lack of skills	9%
Other	7%
Not sure	5%

Source: Taking Responsibility: Leaders' Expectations of Higher Education, Public Agenda 1999

FINDING SEVEN: There is a dramatic gap between the way employers and college professors rate high school graduates and the way parents and teachers view them.

Q93 Overall, would you say the public schools in your community are doing an excellent, good, fair or poor job?

	Parents n=610	Teachers n=600	Employers n=251	Professors n=251
NET Excellent/Good	73%	93%	42%	39%
Excellent	28%	51%	3%	5%
Good	44%	42%	39%	34%
NET Fair/Poor	27%	7%	57%	59%
Fair	21%	6%	39%	50%
Poor	6%	2%	18%	10%
Don't know	*	-	1%	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q94 In terms of academic achievement, do you think that [your child's school/your school/the public schools in the community where you work/teach] generally expect[s] kids to learn too much, too little or are the expectations about right?

	Parents n=609	Teachers n=600	Employers n=250	Professors n=251
Too much	10%	9%	4%	3%
Too little	21%	11%	48%	47%
About right	67%	80%	42%	44%
Don't know	3%	1%	6%	6%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q95 When it comes to academics, would [your child/most of your students/most students] benefit from being pushed harder in school, would they suffer, or wouldn't it make much difference?

	Parents n=694	Teachers n=591	Employers n=250	Professors n=250
Would benefit	45%	61%	74%	84%
Would suffer	20%	14%	4%	3%
Wouldn't make much difference	30%	24%	18%	9%
Don't know	5%	1%	3%	4%

Source: Reality Check 1998 (Parents); Reality Check 2002 (Teachers, Employers, Professors), Public Agenda

Q96 Which statement is more accurate [based on your experience]?

	Parents n=593	Teachers n=595	H.S. Students n=312	Employers n=251	Professors n=251
A high school diploma is no guarantee that the typical student has learned the basics	31%	22%	25%	58%	68%
A high school diploma means that the typical student has at least learned the basics	67%	77%	73%	39%	31%
Neither [VOL.]	N/A	N/A	N/A	1%	1%
Don't know	2%	1%	2%	2%	-

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q97 In general, would you say that report card grades [at your school/that public high school students receive] ACCURATELY reflect students' accomplishments and abilities, that grades tend to be HIGHER than students deserve, or that grades tend to be LOWER than students deserve?

	H.S. Teachers n=159	Professors n=249
Grades accurately reflect accomplishments and abilities	63%	23%
Grades tend to be higher	31%	62%
Grades tend to be lower	3%	2%
Don't know	4%	13%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q98 How confident are you that your child's report card is an accurate description of your child's progress and abilities—very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident or not confident at all?

	Parents n=610
NET Confident	91%
Very confident	60%
Somewhat confident	32%
NET Not confident	8%
Not too confident	6%
Not confident at all	2%
Don't know	1%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q99 When your child graduates from high school, do you think they will have the skills needed to succeed in college, do you think they will lack these skills, or are you not sure?

	Parents of H.S. Students n=256
Child will have skills to succeed in college	62%
Child will lack these skills	20%
Not sure	18%
Don't know	*

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q100 How many of your students have the skills to succeed in college—all, most, some, a few, or none?

	H.S. Teachers n=159
All	3%
Most	48%
Some	35%
A few	14%
None	-
Don't know	-

Source: Reality Check 2001, Public Agenda

Q101 Do the graduates coming from the public schools have the skills needed to succeed in college, or do they really lack these skills?

	Professors n=244
Have the skills	47%
Really lack the skills	43%
Don't know	11%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q102 When your child graduates from high school, do you think they will have the skills needed to succeed in the work world, do you think they will lack these skills, or are you not sure?

	Parents of H.S. Students n=253
Child will have skills to succeed in the work world	67%
Child will lack these skills	19%
Not sure	14%
Don't know	*

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q103 How many of your students have the skills to succeed in the work world—all, most, some, a few, or none?

	H.S. Teachers n=160
All	14%
Most	63%
Some	18%
A few	4%
None	-
Don't know	-

Source: Reality Check 2001, Public Agenda

Q104 Do the graduates coming from the public schools have the skills needed to succeed in the work world, or do they really lack these skills?

	Employers n=251
Have the skills	41%
Really lack the skills	53%
Don't know	5%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

FINDING EIGHT: The vast majority of employers and professors continue to have serious doubts about public school graduates' basic skills—especially when it comes to writing.

Q105 How would you rate [recent job applicants/freshman and sophomore students] when it comes to their ability to write clearly? Would you say excellent, good, fair, or poor?

EMPLOYERS	1998 n=246	2002 n=248
NET Excellent/Good	27%	27%
Excellent	3%	3%
Good	24%	23%
NET Fair/Poor	73%	73%
Fair	45%	45%
Poor	28%	28%
Don't know	*	*

PROFESSORS	1998 n=247	2002 n=251
NET Excellent/Good	18%	25%
Excellent	2%	2%
Good	16%	23%
NET Fair/Poor	81%	75%
Fair	48%	49%
Poor	33%	26%
Don't know	1%	*

Source: Reality Check 1998 and 2002, Public Agenda

Q106 How would you rate [recent job applicants/freshman and sophomore students] when it comes to their grammar and spelling? Would you say excellent, good, fair, or poor?

EMPLOYERS	1998 n=247	2002 n=248
NET Excellent/Good	23%	26%
Excellent	3%	2%
Good	20%	25%
NET Fair/Poor	77%	73%
Fair	47%	45%
Poor	29%	28%
Don't know	1%	*

PROFESSORS	1998 n=247	2002 n=252
NET Excellent/Good	22%	25%
Excellent	3%	2%
Good	19%	24%
NET Fair/Poor	77%	74%
Fair	45%	46%
Poor	32%	27%
Don't know	1%	1%

Source: Reality Check 1998 and 2002, Public Agenda

Q107 How would you rate [recent job applicants/freshman and sophomore students] when it comes to their basic math skills? Would you say excellent, good, fair, or poor?

EMPLOYERS	1998 n=239	2002 n=246
NET Excellent/Good	35%	32%
Excellent	5%	2%
Good	30%	30%
NET Fair/Poor	62%	63%
Fair	41%	42%
Poor	20%	21%
Don't know	3%	5%

PROFESSORS	1998 n=220	2002 n=246
NET Excellent/Good	17%	15%
Excellent	3%	2%
Good	14%	13%
NET Fair/Poor	65%	65%
Fair	36%	38%
Poor	30%	26%
Don't know	18%	20%

Source: Reality Check 1998 and 2002, Public Agenda

Q108 For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you think it is an accurate description of the way things are at your school, if things should be a little better, or if things should be a lot better: Students learn to speak and write well, with proper pronunciation and grammar.

	H.S. Teachers n=916
Accurate description of my school	20%
Should be a little better	50%
Should be a lot better	30%
Not sure	1%

Source: Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools, Public Agenda 2002

Q109 How would you rate [recent job applicants/freshman and sophomore students] when it comes to their work habits, such as being organized and on time? Would you say excellent, good, fair, or poor?

EMPLOYERS	1998 n=250	2002 n=251
NET Excellent/Good	42%	30%
Excellent	8%	4%
Good	35%	27%
NET Fair/Poor	58%	69%
Fair	38%	38%
Poor	20%	32%
Don't know	-	*

PROFESSORS	1998 n=250	2002 n=252
NET Excellent/Good	31%	25%
Excellent	4%	2%
Good	27%	24%
NET Fair/Poor	69%	74%
Fair	48%	54%
Poor	21%	20%
Don't know	*	*

Source: Reality Check 1998 and 2002, Public Agenda

Q110 How would you rate [recent job applicants/freshman and sophomore students] when it comes to being motivated and conscientious? Would you say excellent, good, fair, or poor?

EMPLOYERS	1998 n=249	2002 n=251
NET Excellent/Good	44%	27%
Excellent	8%	5%
Good	35%	22%
NET Fair/Poor	56%	72%
Fair	39%	47%
Poor	17%	25%
Don't know	1%	1%

PROFESSORS	1998 n=248	2002 n=252
NET Excellent/Good	39%	41%
Excellent	9%	6%
Good	30%	36%
NET Fair/Poor	60%	58%
Fair	51%	47%
Poor	9%	12%
Don't know	1%	*

Source: Reality Check 1998 and 2002, Public Agenda

Q111 How would you rate [recent job applicants/freshman and sophomore students] when it comes to being curious and interested in learning new things? Would you say excellent, good, fair, or poor?

EMPLOYERS	1998 n=249	2002 n=250
NET Excellent/Good	52%	46%
Excellent	10%	8%
Good	43%	39%
NET Fair/Poor	48%	53%
Fair	36%	38%
Poor	12%	15%
Don't know	-	*

PROFESSORS	1998 n=249	2002 n=252
NET Excellent/Good	48%	49%
Excellent	10%	7%
Good	39%	42%
NET Fair/Poor	51%	51%
Fair	40%	39%
Poor	11%	12%
Don't know	1%	-

Source: Reality Check 1998 and 2002, Public Agenda

Q112 How would you rate [recent job applicants/freshman and sophomore students] when it comes to their ability to use computers? Would you say excellent, good, fair, or poor?

EMPLOYERS	1998 n=223	1999 n=217	2000 n=242	2001 n=233	2002 n=239
NET Excellent/Good	53%	58%	64%	68%	70%
Excellent	11%	8%	17%	22%	18%
Good	42%	50%	46%	46%	52%
NET Fair/Poor	44%	40%	33%	28%	26%
Fair	27%	29%	24%	23%	18%
Poor	17%	11%	9%	6%	7%
Don't know	3%	2%	3%	4%	5%

PROFESSORS	1998 n=238	1999 n=248	2000 n=249	2001 n=251	2002 n=247
NET Excellent/Good	61%	67%	75%	71%	81%
Excellent	13%	12%	20%	18%	26%
Good	48%	55%	55%	54%	55%
NET Fair/Poor	31%	28%	20%	24%	16%
Fair	29%	24%	18%	21%	15%
Poor	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%
Don't know	8%	5%	6%	5%	3%

Source: Reality Check 1998-2002, Public Agenda

Q113 Teacher education programs can impart different qualities to their students and I want to ask which qualities you think are most essential and which are least essential. Please use a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 means it is least essential: Teachers who are themselves lifelong learners and constantly updating their skills.

	Professors of Education n=899
1-Least essential	*
2	1%
3	2%
4	13%
5-Absolutely essential	84%

Source: Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education, Public Agenda 1997

Q114 Teacher education programs can impart different qualities to their students and I want to ask which qualities you think are most essential and which are least essential. Please use a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 means it is least essential: Teachers who stress correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.

	Professors of Education n=897
1-Least essential	3%
2	12%
3	33%
4	34%
5-Absolutely essential	19%

Source: Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education, Public Agenda 1997

FINDING NINE: Teachers say lack of parental involvement is a serious problem. According to both teachers and parents, parental involvement should focus on what goes on at home rather than on school management issues.

How close do the following statements come to describing your experiences with the parents at your school:

Q115 It is always the same group of parents who are helping out at the school.

	Teachers n=872
NET Close	98%
Very close	76%
Somewhat close	22%
NET Not close	1%
Not too close	1%
Not close at all	*
Not sure	1%

Q116 Too many parents have little idea of what is going on with their kids' school and education.

	Teachers n=872
NET Close	78%
Very close	35%
Somewhat close	43%
NET Not close	21%
Not too close	16%
Not close at all	5%
Not sure	1%

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q117 Which two of the following would most help your students be more successful at school?

	Teachers n=1,111
More parental involvement with child's education	65%
More one-on-one time with teachers	32%
Better sleep habits	29%
More frequent parent-teacher communication	18%
Later school start in morning	14%
More time with family	12%
Mentoring by community members	9%
Regularly scheduled meetings between students and guidance counselor/teacher	7%
Better eating habits	7%

Source: The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher 2002

Q118 Overall, how would you rate the following: The parents at your school in terms of their involvement with their children's education.

	Teachers n=996
NET Excellent/Good	34%
Excellent	6%
Good	28%
NET Fair/Poor	66%
Fair	42%
Poor	24%
Not sure	*

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q119 For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you think it is an accurate description of the way things are at your school, if things should be a little better, or if things should be a lot better: Parental involvement is strong.

	H.S. Teachers n=916
Accurate description of my school	19%
Should be a little better	35%
Should be a lot better	46%
Not sure	*

Source: Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools, Public Agenda 2002

Based upon your experiences and observations at your school, how serious a problem are each of the following:

Q120 Parents who fail to set limits and create structure at home for their kids.

	Teachers n=851
NET Serious	83%
Very serious	36%
Somewhat serious	47%
NET Not serious	16%
Not too serious	15%
Not serious at all	1%
Not sure	1%

Q121 Parents who refuse to hold their kids accountable for their behavior or academic performance.

	Teachers n=851
NET Serious	81%
Very serious	31%
Somewhat serious	50%
NET Not serious	19%
Not too serious	16%
Not serious at all	3%
Not sure	1%

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q122 People often refer to education as a "partnership" between parents and school. What is MOST important for parents to do in this partnership:

	Parents n=1,178
To do their job at home by checking homework and encouraging their kids to learn	83%
To volunteer to raise money and help at school	2%
To help choose staff and develop the curriculum for the school	4%
Neither (VOL.)	1%
Combination (VOL.)	10%
Don't know	*

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q123 People often refer to education as a "partnership" between parents and school. Which description of this partnership comes closest to your own? For parents to:

	Teachers n=836
Do their job by checking homework and encouraging kids to learn	53%
Do their job at home and volunteer to do fundraising and to help at school	28%
Do their job at home, volunteer at school, and help make decisions about staffing and curriculum	15%
Not sure	5%

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q124 Which of the following two approaches to involving parents in their children's education do you prefer:

	Parents n=1,216	Teachers n=940
Get parents directly involved in running the school so that parents have some say over who the schools hire, how they spend money and what they teach	16%	5%
Get parents to be more involved in their children's education at home by such things as limiting television and checking homework	72%	87%
Neither (VOL.)	1%	N/A
Both (VOL.)	11%	N/A
Don't know	1%	8

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q125 Which would you personally feel more comfortable doing:

	Parents n=1,217
Volunteering to chaperone class trips or class parties	68%
Helping to design the school curriculum	22%
Neither (VOL.)	1%
Both (VOL.)	9%
Don't know	*

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q126 Which would you personally feel more comfortable doing:

	Parents n=1,217
Interviewing teachers or principals the school is thinking about hiring	26%
Helping with school events such as career day or book sale	65%
Neither (VOL.)	3%
Both (VOL.)	6%
Don't know	1%

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q127 Have you personally chaperoned a trip or party during this school year or the last one?

	Parents n=1,214
Yes	57%
No	43%
Don't know	*

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q128 Have you personally helped the school design its policy on student behavior and discipline during this school year or the last one?

	Parents n=1,214
Yes	20%
No	80%
Don't know	*

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q129 Have you personally helped decide how to spend your school's money during this school year or the last one?

	Parents n=1,216
Yes	19%
No	81%
Don't know	*

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q130 Have you personally helped to plan the school curriculum during this school year or the last one?

	Parents n=1,214
Yes	15%
No	85%
Don't know	*

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q131 Have you personally served on a committee to decide which new teachers or principal to hire during this school year or the last one?

	Parents n=1,213
Yes	7%
No	93%
Don't know	*

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q132 Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statement…Kids whose parents are not involved at school sometimes get shortchanged and fall through the cracks.

	Parents n=608
NET Agree	72%
Strongly agree	38%
Somewhat agree	35%
NET Disagree	25%
Somewhat disagree	18%
Strongly disagree	7%
Don't know	3%

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q133 How close do the following statements come to describing your experiences with the parents at your school: Kids whose parents are not involved at school sometimes get shortchanged and fall through the cracks.

	Teachers n=870
NET Close	48%
Very close	14%
Somewhat close	35%
NET Not close	50%
Not too close	29%
Not close at all	21%
Not sure	2%

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q134 Here are some statements about the relationship between public schools and their communities. How much do you agree or disagree with each? The schools are most responsive to parents who are very active and vocal.

	School Board Members n=475	Superintendents n=683
NET Agree	88%	87%
Strongly agree	43%	27%
Somewhat agree	45%	60%
NET Disagree	12%	12%
Somewhat disagree	10%	10%
Strongly disagree	3%	2%
Not sure	*	*

Source: Just Waiting to Be Asked?: A Fresh Look at Attitudes on Public Engagement , Public Agenda 2001

Q135 Do you think that children are more likely to get the better teachers and avoid the worst ones if their parents are active and involved at the school or do you think that it does not make a difference?

	Parents n=1,214
More likely to get the better teachers	41%
Does not make a difference	55%
Don't know	4%

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

Q136 Which comes closer to your own view:

	Teachers n=988
Regardless of how active their parents are, all children are treated equally by the school	56%
Active parents know how the system works, so their kids tend to get better treatment by the school	36%
Not sure	8%

Source: Playing Their Parts: Parents and Teachers Talk about Parental Involvement in Public Schools, Public Agenda 1999

FINDING TEN: Teachers, parents and students continue to voice concern about the rough-edged, uncivil atmosphere in many high schools. Few see high schools as places of respect or civility.

Q137 How about the kids you see in public? Would you say that they are respectful toward adults, should things be somewhat better, or should things be a lot better?

	General Public n=2,010
Kids [I see] in public are respectful toward adults	9%
Things should be somewhat better	39%
Things should be a lot better	52%
Don't know	1%

Source: Aggravating Circumstances: A Status Report on Rudeness in America, Public Agenda 2002

Q138 For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you think it is an accurate description of the way things are at your [child's] high school, if things should be a little better, or if things should be a lot better: Students are civil and respectful toward each other.

	Parents of H.S. Students n=799	H.S. Teachers n=908
Accurate description of [child's/my] school	39%	18%
Should be a little better	31%	49%
Should be a lot better	26%	33%
Don't know	4%	-

Source: Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools, Public Agenda 2002

Q139 Please tell me if the following statements about school are true at your high school, if things should be a little better, or if things should be a lot better. Students treat each other with respect.

	H.S. Students n=1,007
True at your high school	30%
Things should be a little better	49%
Things should be a lot better	21%
Don't know	*

Source: Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools, Public Agenda 2002

Q140 I am going to read off several of the problems facing the public schools, nationally, one at a time. For each problem, please tell me how serious you think that problem is in the public schools in your community—is it very serious, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not at all serious?

GENERAL PUBLIC n=1,000	Very Serious	Somewhat serious	Not too serious	Not at all serious	Don't know
Lack of student discipline	43%	33%	17%	4%	3%
Getting good teachers	40%	33%	17%	9%	1%
Overcrowding	38%	33%	16%	10%	3%
Fighting, violence, gangs	37%	26%	24%	12%	1%

Source: Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 2002

Q141 How likely do you think it is that a serious violent incident—an act that causes severe physical harm—will occur at [your child's/your] high school in the next two years? Would you say very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

	Parents of H.S. Students n=801	H.S. Teachers n=915	H.S. Students n=1,007
NET Likely	40%	40%	25%
Very likely	13%	9%	6%
Somewhat likely	28%	31%	19%
NET Not likely	57%	58%	74%
Not too likely	42%	45%	48%
Not at all likely	15%	12%	26%
Don't know	3%	3%	1%

Source: Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools, Public Agenda 2002

Q142 Since you have been in this high school, about how often have you seen students get into a serious fight? Would you say hardly ever, about once a month, or about once a week or more?

	H.S. Students n=1,007
Hardly ever	56%
About once a month	30%
About once a week or more	10%
Never (VOL.)	4%
Don't know	1%

Source: Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools, Public Agenda 2002

Q143 How often do you hear kids cursing in your school's common areas such as the hallways and cafeteria? Would you say often, sometimes, or hardly ever?

	H.S. Students n=1,007
Often	77%
Sometimes	19%
Hardly ever	4%
Don't know	*

Source: Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools, Public Agenda 2002

Now, here are some problems that high schools could have. Please tell me how serious a problem each is in your high school.

Q144 Hallways are too crowded—is this a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not a problem at all in your school?

	H.S. Students n=1,007
NET Serious	64%
Very serious	36%
Somewhat serious	29%
NET Not serious	35%
Not too serious	19%
Not a problem at all	16%
Don't know	*

Q145 Too many students abuse drugs or alcohol—is this a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not a problem at all in your school?

	H.S. Students n=1,006
NET Very/somewhat serious	62%
Very serious	25%
Somewhat serious	36%
NET Not serious	35%
Not too serious	23%
Not a problem at all	12%
Don't know	3%

Q146 Too many students bully and harass other students—is this a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not a problem at all in your school?

	H.S. Students n=1,007
NET Serious	32%
Very serious	11%
Somewhat serious	21%
NET Not serious	67%
Not too serious	39%
Not a problem at all	28%
Don't know	1%

Source: Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools, Public Agenda 2002

Q147 How close does the following statement come to your own view: Teachers spend more time trying to keep order in the classroom than teaching students.

	H.S. Students n=318	H.S. Teachers n=160
NET Close	49%	38%
Very close	23%	16%
Somewhat close	26%	21%
NET Not close	51%	63%
Not too close	27%	32%
Not close at all	24%	31%
Don't know	-	-

Source: Reality Check 2001, Public Agenda

Q148 Would you say that most students in your school treat teachers with respect, should things be a little better, or should things be a lot better?

	H.S. Students n=987
Most students treat teachers with respect	19%
Things should be a little better	60%
Things should be a lot better	21%
Don't know	*

Source: Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think about Large and Small High Schools, Public Agenda 2002

Q149 How much emphasis do you or does your teacher education program place on teaching prospective teachers how to do the following: Teaching prospective teachers to manage a rowdy classroom.

	Education Professors n=898
A lot	30%
Some	50%
A little	15%
None at all	2%
Don't know	3%

Source: Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education, Public Agenda 1997

Q150 Teacher education programs can impart different qualities to their students and I want to ask which qualities you think are most essential and which are least essential. Please use a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 means it is least essential. Teachers who maintain discipline and order in the classroom.

	Education Professors n=896
1-Least essential	1%
2	3%
3	21%
4	38%
5-Absolutely essential	37%
Don't know	*

Source: Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education, Public Agenda 1997

Q151 Please tell me how close each comes to your own view: When a public school teacher faces a disruptive class, it probably means he or she has failed to make lessons engaging enough to the students.

	Education Professors n=897
NET Close	61%
Very close	17%
Somewhat close	44%
NET Not close	39%
Not too close	27%
Not close at all	12%
Don't know	*

Source: Different Drummers: How Teachers of Teachers View Public Education, Public Agenda 1997

Q152 Thinking about the new teachers coming into the profession, do most have this well in hand or do too many fall short? An ability to maintain discipline and order in the classroom.

	Principals n=256
Most have this well in hand	39%
Too many fall short	59%
Don't know	2%

Source: A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why, Public Agenda 2000

FINDING ELEVEN: Superintendents and principals say their biggest problems are politics and bureaucracy. Most want more autonomy over their own schools.

Q153 If you had to pick one of the following, which comes closest to your own view? Talented [superintendents/principals] who leave the field are most likely to leave because they are frustrated by:

	Superintendents n=844	Principals n=868
Low pay and prestige	5%	14%
Politics and bureaucracy	81%	47%
Unreasonable demands brought about by higher standards and accountability	10%	34%
Not sure	4%	4%

Source: Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership, Public Agenda 2001

Q154 Which of these best describes your typical experience when trying to get things done the way you want them to be done?

	Superintendents n=842	Principals n=900
You often feel like your hands are tied by the way things are done in this school system	10%	19%
You can usually get things done the way you want, but you must work around the system	54%	48%
The system helps you get things done the way you want	33%	30%
Not sure	3%	3%

Source: Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership, Public Agenda 2001

In each of the following areas, would you say that you have enough freedom and autonomy, that you need a little more, or that you need a lot more?

Q155 Having the capacity to reward outstanding teachers and staff

	Superintendents n=838	Principals n=888
Have enough freedom and autonomy	24%	32%
Need a little more	30%	32%
Need a lot more	46%	35%
Not sure	1%	1%

Q156 Removing ineffective teachers from the classroom

	Superintendents n=847	Principals n=893
Have enough freedom and autonomy	28%	32%
Need a little more	25%	26%
Need a lot more	46%	41%
Not sure	*	1%

Q157 Hiring teachers and other school staff

	Superintendents n=843	Principals n=902
Have enough freedom and autonomy	78%	71%
Need a little more	17%	22%
Need a lot more	6%	8%

Source: Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership, Public Agenda 2001

Here are some approaches for improving educational leadership in the public schools. Please indicate how effective you think each would be to improve leadership in the nation's schools.

Q158 Giving administrators far more autonomy to run the schools while holding them accountable for getting results.

	Superintendents n=833	Principals n=898
NET Effective	92%	89%
Very effective	45%	38%
Somewhat effective	47%	51%
NET Not effective	7%	10%
Not too effective	6%	10%
Not effective at all	1%	1%
Not sure	1%	1%

Source: Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership, Public Agenda 2001

Thinking back over the last school year, please indicate how much of your attention each of the following items got.

Q159 Legal issues and litigation

	Superintendents n=828	Principals n=782
Got more attention than it deserved	50%	26%
Got less attention	7%	8%
Got about right amount	43%	62%
Not sure	1%	4%

Q160 Parents with complaints or special interests

	Superintendents n=835	Principals n=891
Got more attention than it deserved	48%	45%
Got less attention	2%	1%
Got about right amount	50%	54%
Not sure	1%	*

Q161 Collective bargaining or other union issues

	Superintendents n=658	Principals n=522
Got more attention than it deserved	43%	21%
Got less attention	6%	9%
Got about right amount	51%	63%
Not sure	1%	7%

Q162 Dealing with funding and budgeting

	Superintendents n=835	Principals n=878
Got more attention than it deserved	43%	21%
Got less attention	8%	15%
Got about right amount	49%	64%
Not sure	*	1%

Q163 District politics

	Superintendents n=833	Principals n=857
Got more attention than it deserved	37%	27%
Got less attention	9%	13%
Got about right amount	53%	58%
Not sure	1%	3%

Source: Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership, Public Agenda 2001

Here are some problems or challenges that school administrators may face. Please indicate how close each comes to describing your own experiences in your district.

Q164 My district has experienced an enormous increase in responsibilities and mandates without getting the resources necessary to fulfill them.

	Superintendents n=839	Principals n=898
NET Close	88%	83%
Very close	52%	50%
Somewhat close	37%	33%
NET Not close	11%	16%
Not too close	9%	12%
Not close at all	2%	4%
Not sure	*	1%

Q165 Too often, administrators are obligated to spend a disproportional amount of money and other resources on special education issues.

	Superintendents n=839	Principals n=897
NET Close	84%	65%
Very close	45%	32%
Somewhat close	39%	34%
NET Not close	16%	34%
Not too close	12%	23%
Not close at all	4%	11%
Not sure	-	1%

Q166 Managing harsh public criticism and political heat has become a routine part of being a school administrator these days.

	Superintendents n=839	Principals n=897
NET Close	81%	70%
Very close	46%	37%
Somewhat close	35%	34%
NET Not close	19%	29%
Not too close	15%	20%
Not close at all	4%	9%
Not sure	-	*

Source: Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership, Public Agenda 2001

Q167 Are there times when you feel that there is too much interference from the [SUPE: school board/PRIN: central office] in areas that are best left to your discretion, or does this not happen?

	Superintendents n=839	Principals n=899
There is too much interference at times	69%	55%
This does not happen	29%	42%
Not sure	2%	3%

Source: Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership, Public Agenda 2001

Q168 If you were just starting out and could choose your life's work all over again, would you:

	Superintendents n=848	Principals n=901
Choose the same line of work	73%	66%
Choose a different line of work	17%	23%
Not sure	11%	11%

Source: Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership, Public Agenda 2001

FINDING TWELVE: Holding schools and educators directly accountable for student achievement is still uncommon. Teachers and principals have doubts about it, while parents and the public tend to support it.

Q169 Have you seen, heard or read anything recently about the national education law called the No Child Left Behind Act or, like many, have you not heard of it?

	Registered Voters n=1,050
Yes, seen	14%
Yes, heard	35%
Yes, read	7%
Not heard of	42%
Don't know	2%

Source: Demanding Quality Public Education in Tough Economic Times: What Voters Want from Elected Leaders, Public Education Network (P.E.N.) 2003

Q170 Some communities with underachieving kids are considering proposals to make educators more accountable by tying improvements in students' academic performance to financial incentives for teachers and principals. Has this happened in your district, or not?

	Teachers n=598
Yes	24%
No	74%
Don't know	2%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q171 Are the teachers at your school evaluated according to how well their students do on statewide tests, or is that not part of their evaluation?

	Teachers n=594
Evaluated according to how well their students do	18%
Not part of their evaluation	77%
Don't know	5%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q172 Another proposal would overhaul persistently failing schools by replacing the teachers and principals with new staff and keeping them under strict observation. Has this happened in your district, or not?

	Teachers n=598
Yes	10%
No	87%
Don't know	3%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q173 Another proposal would make principals more accountable for improving their schools. Principals would no longer have tenure; instead they would have contracts that would be terminated if their schools failed to reach specific goals. Has this happened in your district, or not?

	Teachers n=584
Yes	10%
No	86%
Don't know	4%

Source: Reality Check 2002, Public Agenda

Q174 Some communities with underachieving kids are considering proposals to make educators more accountable by tying improvements in students' academic performance to financial incentives for teachers and principals. Generally speaking, do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?

	Teachers n=604	Parents n=607
Good idea	22%	59%
Bad idea	76%	37%
Don't know	2%	5%

Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

Q175 Another proposal would make principals more accountable for improving their schools. Principals would no longer have tenure; instead they would have contracts that would be terminated if their schools failed to reach specific goals. Generally speaking, do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?

	Teachers n=594	Parents n=606
Good idea	29%	63%
Bad idea	69%	29%
Don't know	2%	8%

Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

Q176 Another proposal would overhaul persistently failing schools by replacing the teachers and principals with new staff and keeping them under strict observation. Generally speaking, do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?

	Teachers n=600	Parents n=607
Good idea	23%	58%
Bad idea	74%	35%
Don't know	3%	7%

Source: Reality Check 2000, Public Agenda

Q177 Generally speaking, do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to hold principals accountable for student standardized test scores at the building level?

	Principals n=901
Good idea	34%
Bad idea	48%
Not sure	18%

Source: Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk about School Leadership, Public Agenda 2001

Q178 If a public school in your community does not show progress toward meeting state-approved standards for student learning, would you favor or oppose each of the following measures?

GENERAL PUBLIC n=1,000	Favor	Oppose	Don't know
Offering after-school tutoring by state-approved private providers	90%	9%	1%
Offering students the opportunity to transfer to another school in the district	86%	14%	-
Obtaining additional money from the local district to address the school's problems	77%	22%	1%
Not renewing the contract of the principal	56%	40%	4%
Not renewing the contract of the teachers	56%	40%	4%
Closing the school	21%	77%	2%

Source: Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools 2002

I am going to read you a list of actions some people have said they would take if a school in their community were designated as failing under this new law [No Child Left Behind]. For each one, please tell me if you would be very willing, somewhat willing, a little willing, or not at all willing to take that action if a school in your community was designated as failing under the new law?

Q179 Support tax increases to improve school funding in the failing school

	Registered Voters n=1,050
NET Willing	52%
Very willing	24%
Somewhat willing	28%
NET Not willing	43%
A little willing	22%
Not at all willing	21%
Don't know	6%

Source: Demanding Quality Public Education in Tough Economic Times: What Voters Want from Elected Leaders, Public Education Network (P.E.N.) 2003

Now I'm going to ask you how effective you think each of the following proposals would be in terms of improving teacher quality.

Q180 Reducing class size.

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=663
NET Effective	99%
Very effective	86%
Somewhat effective	13%
NET Not effective	1%
Not too effective	1%
Not effective at all	*
Don't know	*

Q181 Requiring teachers at the secondary school level to major in the subjects they are teaching.

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=662
NET Effective	93%
Very effective	59%
Somewhat effective	34%
NET Not effective	7%
Not too effective	6%
Not effective at all	2%
It depends (VOL.)	*
Don't know	*

Q182 Increasing professional development opportunities for teachers.

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=663
NET Effective	95%
Very effective	57%
Somewhat effective	38%
NET Not effective	4%
Not too effective	4%
Not effective at all	1%
It depends (VOL.)	1%
Don't know	*

Q183 Increasing teacher salaries.

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=662
NET Effective	94%
Very effective	52%
Somewhat effective	42%
NET Not effective	6%
Not too effective	4%
Not effective at all	1%
It depends (VOL.)	*
Don't know	1%

Q184 Requiring new teachers to spend much more time teaching in classrooms under the supervision of experienced teachers.

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=663
NET Effective	89%
Very effective	51%
Somewhat effective	37%
NET Not effective	11%
Not too effective	8%
Not effective at all	3%
It depends (VOL.)	1%
Don't know	*

Q185 Requiring teachers to earn graduate degrees in education.

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=662
NET Effective	64%
Very effective	20%
Somewhat effective	44%
NET Not effective	36%
Not too effective	25%
Not effective at all	10%
It depends (VOL.)	*
Don't know	-

Q186 Requiring teachers to pass tough tests of their knowledge of the subjects they are teaching.

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=663
NET Effective	62%
Very effective	16%
Somewhat effective	46%
NET Not effective	36%
Not too effective	26%
Not effective at all	10%
It depends (VOL.)	1%
Don't know	1%

Q187 Eliminating teacher tenure.

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=662
NET Effective	46%
Very effective	12%
Somewhat effective	35%
NET Not effective	50%
Not too effective	33%
Not effective at all	18%
It depends (VOL.)	1%
Don't know	3%

Q188 Tying teacher rewards and sanctions to their students' performance.

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=662
NET Effective	45%
Very effective	12%
Somewhat effective	33%
NET Not effective	54%
Not too effective	29%
Not effective at all	25%
It depends (VOL.)	1%
Don't know	1%

Q189 Relying more heavily on alternative certification programs.

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=661
NET Effective	52%
Very effective	8%
Somewhat effective	45%
NET Not effective	40%
Not too effective	26%
Not effective at all	14%
It depends (VOL.)	*
Don't know	8%

Q190 Reducing the regulations and requirements for teacher certification.

Base: Teachers with 5 years or less experience	New Teachers n=662
NET Effective	25%
Very effective	7%
Somewhat effective	18%
NET Not effective	74%
Not too effective	34%
Not effective at all	40%
It depends (VOL.)	1%
Don't know	*

Source: A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why, Public Agenda 2000

Q191 And generally speaking, do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to pay higher salaries to teachers who agree to work in difficult schools with hard-to-educate children?

	New Teachers (5 years or less) n=662	Principals n=256
Good idea	84%	81%
Bad idea	15%	17%
Don't know	1%	2%

Source: A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why, Public Agenda 2000

Q192 And generally speaking, do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to pay higher salaries to teachers who prove to be highly effective in improving student academic performance?

	New Teachers (5 years or less) n=661	Principals n=209
Good idea	69%	77%
Bad idea	28%	21%
Don't know	3%	2%

Source: A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why, Public Agenda 2000

Q193 And generally speaking, do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to pay more money to teachers in subjects like math and science, where there are severe shortages?

	New Teachers (5 years or less) n=661	Principals n=252
Good idea	44%	48%
Bad idea	54%	50%
Don't know	2%	2%

Source: A Sense of Calling: Who Teaches and Why, Public Agenda 2000

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